

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ROME 00181 061247Z

ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2052

S E C R E T ROME 0181

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY KISSINGER FROM THE AMBASSADOR

1. I HAVE JUST CABLED MY RESIGNATION TO PRESIDENT FORD. THEREFORE, AS WE BOTH PREPARE TO LEAVE THE DEPARTMENT, I WANT TO EXPRESS MY PLEASURE AT BEING ASSOCIATED WITH YOU DURING THE PAST FOUR YEARS. YOU HAVE BEEN A TRULY EXTRA-ORDINARY SECRETARY--WITH UNMATCHED WISDOM, VISION AND STAMINA.

2. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HAD ONLY A FEW DIFFERENCES ON ISSUES REGARDING ITALY, I WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW PROUD I HAVE BEEN TO CARRY OUT YOUR POLICIES REGARDING OUR OPPOSITION TO THE PCI'S PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. WHEN THE HISTORY OF THE CRITICAL ITALIAN ELECTIONS OF JUNE 20, 1976 IS WRITTEN (WHEN MANY ELEMENTS OF THE U.S. AND ITALIAN MEDIA WERE PREDICTING THE PCI'S SURPASSING OF THE DC AS THE PARTY OF THE RELATIVE MAJORITY), I AM CONVINCED THAT YOUR DECISION TO MAKE CLEAR TO THE ITALIAN ELECTORATE THE SIGNIFICANT STAKES INVOLVED WITH THEIR CHOICE AND THE RELATED INTERNATIONAL RAMIFICATIONS WAS A (IF NOT THE) PRINCIPAL FACTOR IN SAVING THE DAY FOR THE DEMOCRATIC FORCES HERE.

3. CRYSTAL BALLS ARE WORTHLESS IN THIS COUNTRY, INCLUDING MINE, SO IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY IF OR WHEN THE PCI MUST MAKE IT TO THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. I ONLY SAY

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THIS: IT STILL NEED NOT BE INEVITABLE THAT THEY MAKE IT AND IT REMAINS IN THE U.S. INTEREST TO FORESTALL ITS HAPPENING AS LONG AS WE CAN. CERTAINLY THERE ARE SIGNS OF INTERESTING DEVELOPMENTS AND INTERNAL STRESSES WITHIN THE PARTY'S HIERARCHY THAT HAVE ONLY RECENTLY BEEN EVIDENT IN THE FOUR YEARS I HAVE BEEN HERE. REGARDLESS OF WHAT THESE INTERNAL PCI DEVELOPMENTS MIGHT

PRODUCE IN THE YEARS AHEAD, THEY ARE FAR FROM ALLOWING THE USG NOW TO ADOPT ANY CHANGES IN OUR BASIC POLICY POSITION IN OPPOSITION TO THE PCI'S PARTICIPATION IN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT WITHOUT SERIOUS AND UNACCEPTABLE RISKS FOR ITALIAN DEMOCRACY AND OUR STRATEGIC INTERESTS HERE.

4. WE MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PCI'S REMAINING TIME OUT OF POWER (MANY YEARS I HOPE) TO EVALUATE, EXPLORE AND EXPLOIT THEIR REAL ATTITUDES AND INTENTIONS. THIS I FEEL CAN BE BETTER ACCOMPLISHED BY A CHANGE IN OUR POLICY OF CONTACTS WITH THE PCI, INCLUDING OUR VISA POLICY. I HAVE EXPRESSED MY OPINION ON THIS ISSUE A FEW DAYS AGO IN ROME'S 0049 . AS I SAID THERE, GREAT CARE MUST BE GIVEN TO HOW AND IF WE CHANGE THIS POLICY WHICH HAS SERVED SUCH A USEFUL PURPOSE DURING THE '76 ELECTIONS HERE. BUT WE MUST REALIZE WE CAN NO LONGER HOLD THE LINE ON THIS. TO DO SO WOULD BE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND UNDERCUT OUR POLICY.

5. I REALIZE THAT AS WE ARE DISENGAGING FROM THE DEPARTMENT THESE ARE ISSUES THAT OTHERS WILL DECIDE, BUT I DID WANT YOU TO HAVE THE BENEFIT OF MY THINKING IN THESE ISSUES BEFORE THE END OF OUR ASSIGNMENTS.

6. MY VERY BEST WISHES FOR THE FUTURE. YOU ARE IN THE ENVIABLE POSITION OF KNOWING THAT HISTORY AND THE FUTURE WILL TREAT YOU WELL. REGARDS, JOHN.VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, CAT-B, AMBASSADORS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, POLITICAL PARTIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ROME00181
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: 1
Expiration:
Film Number: n/a
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770175/aaaacnls.tel
Line Count: 89
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Message ID: 806eb8dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3651855
Secure: LOCK1
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S RESIGNATION
TAGS: APER, PINT, US, IT, PCI, (VOLPE, JOHN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/806eb8dc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009